

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**BRIDGING THE GAP
A ROADMAP FOR JOINT MILITARY-CIVILIAN STABILITY OPERATIONS**

by

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The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq initiated a paradigm shift in the thinking about cooperation between civilian and military operations, calling for the military to take a greater role in post-kinetic operations and civilian agencies to take a greater role in the planning phase before kinetic operations. Prior to operations in Afghanistan, the military had shunned "nation-building" and did little planning for Phase IV in Iraq. Both theaters clearly demonstrate the need for closer military and interagency cooperation in all phases of the campaigns. The South Asian Tsunami Relief effort highlighted the military's extraordinary capacity to deliver immediate assistance, means vital and beyond anything civilian agencies can muster in "super-disasters." It was immediately apparent, however, that the military needed the knowledge and experience of civilian practitioners of disaster assistance to deliver assistance where needed with the cooperation of host countries. In a world of asymmetric warfare, where failed or failing states must be rebuilt, often while kinetic operations are ongoing, a new level of cooperation will be needed. This project will explore the advantages of closer military-interagency cooperation and propose approaches on how to achieve a better partnership.

BRIDGING THE GAP A ROADMAP FOR JOINT MILITARY-CIVILIAN STABILITY OPERATIONS

Recent regional disasters, some spanning several countries, and nation building during ongoing kinetic operations have highlighted the need for the Department of Defense (DOD) to plan, train and coordinate closely with other elements of national power in order to achieve unity of effort and success. In the arena of international humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, DOD and the lead United States agency responder, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), have built relationships and have orchestrated their efforts effectively. The absence of conflict is a contributing factor to recent successes in joint efforts following the devastating aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. However, this synchronization of efforts is far more difficult when reconstruction, stability and nation building operations are undertaken in areas where conflict is ongoing. This paper will briefly review USAID and DOD cooperation at the operational level but its primary focus is on the tactical level in the theater of operations in Iraq. On-the-ground experience with the MultiNational Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) and the unique partnership forged in Baghdad between the First Cavalry Division (1st CAV) and USAID/Iraq from March 2004 through March 2005, which spanned a deadly insurgent uprising, provide concrete examples of operational issues that were addressed in the field. Applying lessons learned from this partnership will foster understanding between the organizations and result in better coordination and cooperation in similar operations.¹

The Strategic Level of the Interagency

On December 7, 2005, President George W. Bush signed National Security Presidential Directive-44 (NSPD-44), entitled "Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization." It superseded the May 1997 Presidential Decision Directive-56 on "Managing Complex Contingency Operations" and it designated the Secretary of State as the leader and coordinator for all United States Government (USG) reconstruction and stabilization efforts. The Directive outlined the Secretary's responsibilities as well as those of other federal departments and agencies in assisting the Secretary. Further, it required that "[t]he Secretaries of State and Defense will integrate stabilization and reconstruction contingency plans with military contingency plans when relevant and appropriate ... [and] develop a general framework for fully coordinating stabilization and reconstruction activities and military operations at all levels where appropriate."² Finally, it created a Policy Coordination Committee in the National Security Council "... for Reconstruction and Stabilization."³

NSPD-44 is the recognition at the strategic level of the need to designate a lead executive department to coordinate an interagency effort to assist other nations or regions in post-conflict reconstruction as well as to help them achieve stability, democracy and functioning economies. This assistance will “enable governments abroad to exercise sovereignty over their own territories and to prevent the use of those territories for … [those] who pose a threat to U.S. foreign policy, security, or economic interests.”⁴ USAID will have a significant role in achieving this objective through its humanitarian, disaster relief, and development assistance programs. Recent experience in reconstruction and stabilization efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan underscores the necessity of integrated interagency cooperation to achieve a unity of effort at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. Most of the interagency focus, however, has been between DOD and USAID in Washington, whereas the boots on the ground have stumbled, unable to figure out who is responsible for what in the theater of operations. It is imperative that USG executive departments and agencies train the men and women, civilian and military, conducting activities and operations on the ground and reinforce the importance of an interagency effort. Successfully attaining NSPD-44’s objectives will be impossible if interagency efforts are not migrated down to those at the tactical level.

The Operational Level of the Interagency

In late November 2005, the DOD issued a directive entitled *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*, which provides policy and assigns responsibilities within DOD in support of SSTR operations . This directive recognizes that “stability operations are a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct and support.”⁵ It also elevates DOD’s priority of stability operations to the level of combat operations and integrates them into all of DOD’s functions. Notably, the directive emphasizes the necessity of an interagency effort in SSTR operations that would include international organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) through participation in military-civilian teams. These teams would concentrate on “ensuring security, developing local governance structures, promoting bottom-up economic activity, rebuilding infrastructure, and building indigenous capacity for such tasks.”⁶ Focusing on these goals indicates that DOD understands the necessity of combining short-term objectives with the longer-term, sustainable development of a country or region. Implementation of this policy at the operational level within DOD will lead to improved interagency tactical level efforts. However, it will take time to integrate it into the Department’s “doctrine, organizations, training,

education, exercises, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities and planning”⁷ activities and for the interagency system to accept DOD’s new approach to SSTR activities.

Inculcating interagency collaboration amongst the vast number of USG employees, including the military, will be a time-consuming and costly endeavor. At the very least, funding must be made available, policies and doctrine written, and training programs developed. Links between the executive departments and agencies and points of contact will need to be identified and nurtured. To those ends, and recognizing the critical need to coordinate closely with DOD in conflict prone regions, USAID created a Military Policy Board (MPB) and an Office of Military Affairs (OMA) in the spring of 2005. During an October 2005 public meeting of the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid, a USAID official gave an overview of the Board’s and OMA’s roles in the Agency. The MPB will concentrate “... on the Agency’s long-term strategic relationship with DOD ... [by influencing] planning, operations, and military doctrine in the long term, strengthening USAID’s ability to work with DOD and increasing DOD’s understanding of USAID.”⁸ OMA, on the other hand, will focus on the operational aspects of the relationship with DOD. Some of its objectives include (1) functioning as the point of contact between the Agency and the military; (2) creating mutually beneficial relationships and incorporating NGOs into them; (3) synchronizing planning between the parties; (4) expanding mutual training, exercising jointly, and knowledge of the respective organizations and; (5) establishing guidance and procedures that conform to both organizations’ legal requirements.⁹ USAID set ambitious goals for these offices and it will require time and a strong commitment on the part of the organizations involved to realize them.

As of this writing, OMA is still in its infancy, but it is moving forward. “Senior meetings have already taken place with Special Operations Command, European Command, and the Civil Affairs Office at Fort Bragg, and exchanges of staff have been approved.”¹⁰ USAID will approach the Central, Southern, and Pacific Commands to gain their support for similar personnel exchanges. USAID views these ties to the Combatant Commanders (COCOMs) as key to the harmonization of their respective operational plans. Being present and fully engaged with the COCOMs will give USAID an opportunity to provide input into their Theater Security Cooperation Plans from a development perspective. To that end, USAID will hire former Foreign Service Officers with development expertise to fill the Fort Bragg and COCOM slots.¹¹ While this is certainly a highly desirable step in the right direction, OMA also needs to focus on the tactical level relationships between USAID and subordinate commanders in the theater of operations. All the planning at the operational level will be rendered worthless if the boots on the ground do not know about USAID and what it does. The following examination of the

USAID/1st CAV partnership in Baghdad illustrates lessons learned in the field and proposes actions to be taken when similar situations throw DOD and USAID together in the field.

The Tactical Level of the Interagency

Upon arrival in theater in late March 2004, the Commanding General of the 1st CAV met with the new USAID Mission Director, James Stephenson, to articulate his plan to focus the 1st CAV's activities on the reconstruction of essential services in his theater of operations—Baghdad—particularly in the poorest, most neglected and overcrowded neighborhoods. Major General Peter Chiarelli expressed his desire to join forces with USAID to accomplish these efforts; however, he did not articulate how this partnership would operate. This was the first time that a general officer had approached USAID in theater with such an offer, so the Mr. Stephenson was somewhat nonplussed and unsure how to fit USAID into MG Chiarelli's plan. The meeting concluded congenially but without any concrete strategies for the way ahead. Within the week, on 4 April 2004, the insurgency struck hard in Baghdad, as well as throughout the country, and the partnership was put on hold as the 1st CAV was focused on warfighting.

In mid-April, MG Chiarelli revived his partnership idea with an enormous sense of urgency. He believed that putting people to work on essential service and infrastructure projects in their communities would dissuade potential insurgents and convince active insurgents that their lives and neighborhoods were improving. His chief engineer presented an overview of the 1st CAV's reconstruction plan to key USAID personnel and its infrastructure contractors. Many of USAID's Baghdad projects complemented those planned by the 1st CAV and new projects were identified. USAID could also supplement job creation through its Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), which had flexible grant authority up to \$250,000 per grant that could be used for large job-creation activities such as hiring day laborers to dig trenches for the sewer pipes that the 1st CAV and USAID would install. Although off to a slow start owing to the degraded security situation in Baghdad, the jobs creation program eventually took off and employed between 30,000 to 40,000 laborers a week within a couple of months and sustained that level throughout the partnership's life. The fruits of this partnership helped to restore security and stability to the most explosive and poorest Baghdad neighborhoods.

This anecdote illustrates the need for planning at the tactical level. Although USAID participated in post-conflict planning with DOD prior to deploying to Iraq in March 2003, there was no ongoing joint planning once the boots were on the ground. USAID had been operating in Iraq for a year when MG Chiarelli met with the Mission Director, yet there had been only sporadic contact between USAID and the military throughout Iraq and no sustained

collaboration of efforts. Opportunities to leverage projects and eliminate duplication of efforts were lost during that time. The 1st CAV/USAID partnership could have started immediately upon the 1st CAV's arrival in theater if the two organizations had planned in advance together. Misunderstandings about how and why each operates could have been averted had time been spent, prior to the 1st CAV's deployment to Baghdad, learning about each other. Awareness of resource constraints—in personnel, funding and contracting—would have sparked a review to identify obstacles and propose ways to overcome or, at the very least, mitigate them. In spite of these difficulties, the partnership worked, albeit with a few bumps in the road, because two creative and strategic leaders championed the cause and empowered their people to find solutions.

To form future effective partnerships at the tactical level, DOD and OMA must identify their key players in theater and bring them together, ideally prior to their deployment, so they can develop a professional relationship and explore areas of potential collaboration. In the case of Baghdad, it was known in advance that MG Chiarelli and the 1st CAV would be replacing the Third Infantry Division in March 2004 and that the USAID Mission Director would arrive in late February. At the very least, USAID should have sent the Mission Director to Fort Hood, Texas prior to his deployment to meet with the general and his senior staff. Had this happened, he would have learned that three of MG Chiarelli's lines of operations focused on essential services, governance and economic pluralism¹² which were related to three of USAID/Iraq's strategic objectives—"restoring essential infrastructure ... expanding economic activity, ... [and] improving efficiency and accountability of government."¹³ As the organizations had similar objectives, the two leaders could have discussed how they could leverage each other's resources to create a more effective and sustainable impact on the citizens of Baghdad. If this meeting had occurred, it would have created the framework for cooperation sooner, rather than later, and permitted the leaders to start cultivating a professional and personal relationship.

Establishing roles and outlining the constraints faced by each organization is essential for success in interagency endeavors. More likely than not, the members have not interacted previously and do not have a clear understanding of the capabilities and expertise of other agencies. The predeployment meeting should address these issues, which will help clear any misconceptions as well as manage expectations of the parties. In the case of the USAID/1st CAV partnership, this meeting would have afforded the leaders the occasion to sketch out their organizational charts and explain the roles and proficiencies of each office or unit. Areas of potential collaboration could have been identified that would leverage combined resources and expertise. Additionally, identifying key decision-makers in each organization would facilitate

communication between the parties. Openly disclosing each organization's legal and policy constraints and their effect on operations would also promote a better understanding of the operational environments. This initial dialogue on these issues should dissolve preconceived misconceptions or expectations of capabilities while building mutual trust and respect.

Once OMA is staffed and resourced, it can initiate this initial dialogue between the organizations at the tactical level. At the operational level, the USAID COCOM representatives will be integrated in the campaign planning process through either Joint Interagency Coordination Groups or Joint Interagency Task Forces. Their input throughout the planning process will educate the Combatant Commanders and planners on USAID's capabilities, constraints and resources. Concurrently, they will keep OMA informed on issues that involve USAID, its personnel and programs. Once the supporting military divisions are identified, the representatives should relay this information to OMA as soon as possible without compromising operational security. This would allow OMA to contact the divisions prior to their deployment to arrange meetings that would acquaint the organizations with each other. These meetings could also address logistical and support possibilities, which would be dependent on the circumstances in the theater of operations. Most importantly, the chain of command needs to be defined, agreed upon, written down and disseminated throughout the organizations. While the seeds of a partnership are being planted, it is essential that the parties understand that they are autonomous organizations governed by separate authorities. Further, although they should work in tandem, there must be a clear division of command—USAID, and its implementers, will be responsible for humanitarian assistance and development decisions whereas the military's duty will be security. Neither organization has authority over the other nor should the military instruct USAID's implementers to perform any tasks. Should there be any conflict over this division, it should be brought to the attention of the pertinent decision-maker in each organization for resolution. Defining the chain of command and ensuring that both parties are in agreement will lay the foundation of a mutually beneficial partnership.

With the relationships established, and armed with knowledge of each other's capabilities, the partnership will take root once the parties deploy. Upon arrival at post, the Mission Director would pass along his strategic view of how the partnership will work and attempt to allay any concerns the staff may have about working with the military. He could solicit ideas from the staff on ways to handle the partnership and how best to manage the Commander's expectations. A review of the program portfolio would identify potential joint projects; however, identification of specific projects must wait until the Commander assesses his units' area of operations, determines the areas in which it will focus its efforts and identifies the types of projects it will

undertake. Once done, the parties should convene to evaluate the project proposals and decide how best to collaborate. This could be difficult, given the different perspectives of the organizations—the Commander wants highly visible, immediate impact projects, whereas USAID generally looks to long-term, sustainable activities. This should be mitigated by the educational value of the predeployment meeting, the results of which should have been shared with the decision-makers in each organization. Both sides should be better positioned to propose projects to fit into the overlapping strategic objectives and the analysis of the projects should be smoother and quicker. Relationships at the field level are now developed and the joint effort can begin.

Throughout the USAID/1st CAV partnership, operational issues between the organizations caused frustration between the parties. In future civilian-military cooperative arrangements, these must be addressed early and a clear understanding of each party's position on them must be attained. One area of contention between USAID and the 1st CAV centered on the risk each party was willing to take in a conflict-prone environment. The 1st CAV is trained in warfighting and is appropriately equipped to operate in a combat zone. As its area of operations included Baghdad and surrounding districts, it was necessary for them to patrol it daily. It also had to manage and monitor its projects. To spread its presence throughout Baghdad, the 1st CAV established forward operating bases. In contrast, USAID operated from the heavily fortified Green Zone and was more risk adverse. USAID was also required to follow the Department of State's Diplomatic Security (DS) policies and procedures, which offered as much protection to the staff as possible, and were stringent. These policies mandated that trip requests outside the Green Zone be submitted two days in advance, so the best and safest route could be determined, as well as alternate routes. In April 2004, DS policy required that passengers ride in a convoy of two fully armored vehicles with two armed security personnel in each vehicle.¹⁴ Often, trips were cancelled or personnel recalled, based on new security intelligence. Each day, trips were prioritized, resulting in some being denied or postponed owing to the limited number of vehicles available. This caused intense frustration in the 1st CAV, when USAID could not travel in Baghdad to review joint projects, as it did not understand USAID's risk adverse behavior and the limitations placed on it by DS. Clearly articulated security policies and procedures are essential to enhance understanding of each party's capabilities and restraints.

Another issue which caused friction with the 1st CAV, as well as other MNF-I units across the country, was the reluctance of NGOs and some contractors to work with the military. USAID uses contractors and NGOs to implement USAID's national programs, some of which require a footprint across large regions of Iraq or the entire country. Many of these NGOs do not want to

be associated with the military in their regions as they feel it compromises their neutrality and increases their risk of being targeted by insurgents. Further, all of USAID's contractors and NGOs hire a significant number of local staff for their operations, who are also concerned about being perceived as working with the military, as it increases their risk of being targeted. During times of heightened security threats, it is often only the local staff that venture into the communities in which implementers work. This separation between the military and the NGOs is called "humanitarian space" and is not always understood by the military, who would prefer to join forces with the NGOs and their activities. USAID needs to ensure that the military understands the reasons why some of its implementers may shy away from collaborating with the military and the military needs to make certain that all of its personnel are made aware as well. This should not be an educational process in the field; rather, the concept should be integrated into the military's training programs so that all officers and enlisted men and women understand the concept of "humanitarian space" prior to deploying to a region where NGOs may be operating. Awareness of the NGOs' concerns may diminish friction between the entities in a conflict prone environment and strengthen the NGOs' confidence in their security situation. The consequences could be severe if an NGO believes its "humanitarian space" has been violated. If it feels it and its employees are facing a high threat level, it will terminate operations and leave the country.¹⁵ It could be very difficult, time-consuming and costly to replace the NGO and valuable time could be lost in the effort.

Because not all implementers are against working with the military, it is necessary to identify opportunities where the parties can complement each other's activities. For example, the 1st CAV assisted some NGOs and contractors in Baghdad during the insurgent uprising in the spring of 2004, when more than eighty percent of USAID's expatriate implementers left Iraq, because they lived and worked outside the Green Zone and felt vulnerable.¹⁶ Many of them continued operating remotely from Jordan and Kuwait, while their Iraqi staff remained and continued activities in areas that were relatively secure. For ongoing projects in volatile areas, primarily small infrastructure ones, such as rehabilitating schools and clinics, the 1st CAV played an important role in monitoring progress of those activities. The implementers gave the 1st CAV project site locations, so the patrols could drive by them¹⁷, observe what was happening, and report back. Sometimes the patrols photographed the project and e-mailed images to the implementers, which was enormously helpful for the implementers in managing their projects and ensuring that work was continuing. They did not have to risk their employees' safety by sending them to dangerous areas and it ensured that Iraqi contractors working on the projects were fulfilling the terms of the agreement and could be compensated accordingly.

"Humanitarian space" was not violated because all communication was electronic. Minimizing risk for the implementers' employees as well as unobtrusively monitoring project progress is a cooperative arrangement that should be explored in similar situations elsewhere.

One mechanism for a successful USAID/military partnership is to have at least one liaison officer in each other's theater-based headquarters. This could result in improved coordination and communication between and within the organizations as well as reduced stress that is inherent when working with a different organizational culture. These individuals should be embedded in the organization and have the authority to represent their respective leadership. USAID learned this lesson only after working with the 1st CAV for several months. Immediately into the partnership, USAID constantly fielded questions, attempted to comply with requests for information and reviewed project proposals from all of the 1st CAV's brigade combat teams, which severely taxed the already overburdened, small staff. It quickly became apparent that USAID could not adequately manage its ongoing activities and meet the many demands of the 1st CAV. To alleviate the burden, USAID approached MG Chiarelli and requested that an officer, with whom it worked closely and who understood USAID's operational environment, as a Liaison Officer (LNO). MG Chiarelli complied with the understanding that USAID would house, feed and provide office space and equipment to him. On its part, USAID understood that the LNO would report to his commanding officer and would have certain duties to fulfill. Embedding him in the USAID Mission as a single point of contact for the 1st CAV eased the strain on the staff by allowing them to focus their efforts on successfully managing a large program in an uncertain environment.

USAID did not reciprocate and assign an LNO to the 1st CAV's Camp Victory headquarters nor did the 1st CAV ask for one. This was probably a mistake, as a USAID presence in the headquarters could have enhanced the relationship. An immediate source of information, the liaison could have explained USAID policies and procedures, thus enhancing the 1st CAV's understanding of how USAID operates. This would have helped to avoid misunderstandings and the frustration some officers felt when working with USAID. One such example was that the 1st CAV wanted USAID's job-creation program to hire specific Iraqis it had identified for specific projects. When USAID refused, with cause, it caused friction between the organizations. The 1st CAV officers did not know that under USAID contracts and grants USAID cannot direct its implementers to hire specifically named individuals. A USAID LNO embedded with the 1st CAV could have told the officers about this restriction and avoided misunderstanding. The importance of the LNOs' contributions to the success of a partnership needs to be addressed by OMA and DOD prior to deployment. Senior military leadership

should explicitly endorse the selected liaisons to ensure that the jobs are beneficial to their careers. The liaisons should also be given the opportunity, in advance of deployment, preferably, to build relationships with their assigned organization. The greater understanding the liaisons have about the organization will allow them to operate effectively as interlocutors between the parties, as well as provide sound and timely advice.

Another issue requiring advanced consideration is that of gathering data, or metrics, and reporting them. In Baghdad, this became an enormous problem for USAID and its implementers because numerous organizations, including the 1st CAV, wanted data in multiple formats weekly and often on an ad hoc basis. USAID designs programs that include measurable indicators of progress but these did not always fit into what the requesting organizations wanted. Additionally, USAID's electronic database was incomplete and outdated, owing to the monitoring contractor's poor performance. Had it been up-to-date, it would still not have been compatible with the databases of the other organizations, so USAID's staff manually compiled the available information into an EXCEL spreadsheet to meet the demands. This created an immense burden on the small USAID staff because by March 2005, there were approximately 9,000 activities in the spreadsheet. Further, as interest intensified in the number of Iraqis employed on reconstruction projects, each organization was required to report on the number of jobs it had generated each week. Because USAID was not gathering employment data on most of its activities, with the notable exception of OTI's job-creation program, it had to request the information from its implementers, which increased their workload as well. The numerous data requests fielded by USAID could have been avoided if there had been clear definition and agreement on data to be collected and standardization of the reporting format prior to combined operations.

In addition to joint agreement on data and its reporting format, consideration should be given to creating a centralized database into which all parties report their data. Responsibility for its management, staffing, and funding would be agreed upon in advance thus enabling the accountable party to prepare itself and be ready to operate upon deployment. The office or unit charged with the maintenance and security of the database would also function as the primary reporting entity. When producing reports, the unit must exercise care not to release sensitive NGO data, such as specific project locations, that could lead to a violation of their "humanitarian space." To mitigate this possibility, each contributing organization should designate and authorize an individual to liaise with the central office as well as to provide clearance on reports that include its data. This would also reduce friction between organizations and ensure

accurate and complete reporting. Additionally, it would lessen the strain on all parties fielding multiple demands for data as they can refer the requestors to the central office.

In Baghdad, the Information Management Unit (IMU) was created to report on all supplemental-funded reconstruction projects; however, it was understaffed and many organizations were unaware of its existence. It made a concerted effort in the fall of 2004 to capture data on all of the activities. USAID designated an individual to work closely with the IMU, which ensured up-to-date and accurate reporting of USAID activities. Despite the renewed emphasis on a centralized database and reporting unit, there were many in the military who did not know about it. This was evident by the military's numerous solicitations for data. Once the information was submitted to the military, USAID was not offered clearance on draft reports and often never saw final products. One such example was the military's weekly Strategic Cities report, which included grossly inaccurate reporting of USAID's activities and was not cleared by USAID. This report circulated at the highest levels in the Embassy, MNF-I, and various departments in Washington; however, the USAID Officer responsible for the database was unaware of its existence. Upon discovering the report, the Officer learned that the military had unauthorized direct access to USAID's electronic database. The report's drafters assumed the electronic database was complete (it was not as mentioned above) and did not clear the report through the Agency. As a result, incorrect USAID data was disseminated to decision-makers. The drafters' access to the electronic database was immediately cancelled and they were referred to the IMU. USAID's close work with the IMU ensured its data was accurately recorded in the database and IMU cleared the data through USAID before it was released. However, how that data was reported by other organizations was rarely cleared by the Agency. Policy and procedures need to be agreed upon and followed to ensure accurate reporting of another organization's data, to include the opportunity to clear draft reports.

Conclusion

Until recently, there has not been a tightly coordinated interagency response to post-conflict stability and reconstruction efforts. Ongoing military kinetic operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, while USG agencies are concurrently conducting stabilization and reconstruction activities, have highlighted the necessity of unifying and coordinating the elements of national power to achieve success. The recent issuance of NSPD-44 acknowledges the importance of an interagency effort of stability and reconstruction operations at the strategic level through the formation of a National Security Council Policy Coordination Committee for Reconstruction and Stabilization in the National Security Council. At the operational level, it provides for a

structured approach and response for these operations by designating the Secretary of State as the interagency leader and coordinator for the USG efforts. In tandem with NSPD-44, DOD announced its new policy on the military's role in SSTR operations, which equated them to combat operations, and stressed the vital role of the interagency. This new strategic and operational emphasis on interagency operations is admirable, but it will take considerable time, resources and a cultural shift throughout the USG before it becomes a seamless method of conducting business.

Realizing the need for close USAID/DOD cooperation, USAID stood up OMA in 2005 as the focal point of its contact with the military. Its objectives are to interact continuously with DOD in doctrinal development, campaign planning, and operations while building relationships between the organizations. Although not fully staffed as of this writing, it is currently in the process of placing USAID personnel with the COCOMs and Fort Bragg's Civil Affairs Office. This will enhance understanding between the organizations and Combatant Commanders will be able to incorporate USAID's expertise in humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and longer-term development assistance into their campaign plans. As OMA matures, it could further improve the relationship with the military by opening dialogue and establishing the respective chains of command with military divisions prior to deployment to areas where USAID will be posted. This will help to lay the foundation of the tactical relationship in the theater of operations and minimize the operational issues such as those experienced in the USAID/1st CAV partnership. OMA will be vital in transforming what, in the past, had been generally ad hoc relationships into planned and coordinated tactical efforts in the field.

The partnership between USAID and the 1st CAV was successful, but not without some tension. However, the lessons learned from the experience can be applied to future joint operations to curtail potential problems and reinforce the relationship. These lessons are summarized as follows:

- It is essential for senior leaders to develop a personal and professional relationship, preferably prior to the military deployment.
- Understanding the organizations' culture and knowing their capabilities, constraints and resources will lead to more efficient and effective efforts in the area of operations.
- Articulating their respective objectives facilitates identification of joint activities and enhances their impact on targeted beneficiaries.
- Explaining DS security policies and procedures will reduce frustration when USAID cannot travel to meet its military counterparts in the field.

- Clarifying the NGOs' need for "humanitarian space" will help protect them and their staff in the region and could also provide the impetus to develop other methods of cooperation.
- Assigning liaison officers to the organizations' headquarters will bolster the relationship because expertise will be immediately available to both organizations.
- Agreeing upon the data to be collected and a standard reporting format will reduce the burdens imposed on the much smaller USAID staff.
- Creating a centralized database and designating an office or unit to manage, secure, and report on it ensures consistent and accurate reports.
- Finally, appointing liaison officers to the reporting office will enable the organizations to clear on the reports thus ensuring that they are not distorted.

The Baghdad experience illustrates that the military and USAID can operate effectively at the tactical level. Although there is no one-size-fits-all framework for future collaborative efforts, applying these lessons learned will mitigate tension and result in a dynamic, efficient, and fruitful partnership.

Endnotes

¹ The author is a USAID Foreign Service Officer who served in Baghdad from March 2004 through March 2005 and was a member of the 1st CAV/USAID partnership. Conclusions and recommendations are drawn from personal observations of and interaction with the partners and MultiNational Forces-Iraq.

² George W. Bush, *National Security Presidential Directive-44* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 7 December 2005,); available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-44.html>; Internet; accessed 20 December 2005

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations, Directive Number 3000.05*, (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 2005); available from http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/sorres/pdf/d300005_112805/d300005p.pdf; Internet; accessed 25 February 2006.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid, *Public Meeting, October 19, 2005* [record on-line] (accessed 5 February 2006); 7; available at http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/acvfa/101905meeting_sum.pdf.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Peter W. Chiarelli and Patrick R. Michaelis, "Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations," *Military Review* 85 (July-August 2005): 7.

¹³ *USAID Assistance to Iraq*, available from <http://www.usaid.gov/iraq>; Internet; accessed 1 February 2006.

¹⁴ This policy later changed to three fully armored vehicles with ten armed security personnel, which further impacted USAID's ability to travel outside the Green Zone.

¹⁵ Three of USAID's NGO grantees did terminate their operations and left the country during the year of the USAID/1st CAV partnership.

¹⁶ From April 2004 to March 2005, fifteen of USAID's expatriate contractors and at least 50 of their Iraqi employees were killed.

¹⁷ Several NGOs and contractors did not want the military to visit their project sites, as they believed that it would put the site, the Iraqi subcontractors and the project's beneficiaries at risk of being targeted. Therefore, the patrols were requested to drive by the sites rather than stop and walk through them.